

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION EA-13

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INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 10390

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RP

SUBJ: PRESIDENT MARCOS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

1. ALTHOUGH OFFICIALLY CONTROLLED MANILA PRESS REPORTED THAT PRESIDENT MARCOS SPENT A QUIET BIRTHDAY AT HIS DESK, THE FACT IS THAT HIS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION WAS A TWO-DAY BLAST CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED BY HIS WIFE IMELDA. FOR SENIOR OFFICIALS OF GOVERNMENT, THE TOP MILITARY BRASS, AND THE CHIEFS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, ALL WORK CAME TO A HALT WHILE WE WERE PARADED THROUGH THE CEREMONIES. THE FUNERAL SERVICES FOR THE LATE CARDINAL SANTOS, WHICH FELL IN THE MIDDLE OF THESE EVENTS, WERE VERY LARGELY ECLIPSED AS FAR AS PHILIPPINE OFFICIALDOM WAS CONCERNED.

2. CEREMONIES BEGAN SEPT. 10 AT 8:00 A.M. WITH MILITARY REVIEW, FLY-BY, AND RAMBLING SPEECH BY PRESIDENT AT CAMP AGUINALDO, FOLLOWED BY DEDICATION OF NEWLY CONSTRUCTED FACILITIES THERE. THIS CONSUMED ENTIRE MORNING.

3. CEREMONIES RESUMED 7:00 P.M. THAT SAME EVENING WITH MOONLIGHT PARADE, RECEPTION, SERENADE, DINNER, FLOOR SHOW, AND CONCERT. THESE

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FESTIVITIES ENDED AT 2:00 A.M. THEY THEN RESUMED AT 8:30 A.M. FOR

CHIEFS OF MISSION, WHO ATTENDED MASS, INSPECTED EXHIBITION ON NEW SOCIETY AND ULTIMATELY TOASTED PRESIDENT'S HEALTH AT 12:00 NOON.

4. THAT AFTERNOON, AN EXTRAVAGANZA TOOK PLACE AT LUNETTA WITH TOP ENTERTAINERS, NEW MANILA AIRPORT BUILDING WAS DEDICATED, AND SEVERAL OTHER PROJECTS WERE OPENED IN PRESIDENTIAL HONOR.

5. IN GENERAL, EVERY ASPECT OF THE OCCASION WAS TOO MUCH, TOO LONG, AND IN QUESTIONABLE TASTE. FOR EXAMPLE, ALL GENERAL OFFICERS IN THE ARMED SERVICES (CONSTABULARY COMMANDER RAMOS EXCEPTED) WERE REQUIRED, AS PART OF THE PALACE FLOOR SHOW, TO PARADE IN GARISH FEMALE ATTIRE. THIS CAUSED MUCH GRUMBLING AMONG MILITARY HIERARCHY, AND WIVES OF SERVICE CHIEFS STOOD CONSPICUOUSLY IN A GRIM, UN-SMILING PHALANX THROUGHOUT THE HILARITY.

6. COMMENT: THIS WHOLE AFFAIR WAS A SACCHARINE SUFFUSION OF SYCOPHANCY WHICH REMINDED ME UNHAPPILY OF THE HEYDAYS OF SUKARNO AND SIHANOUK. ALTHOUGH IMELDA WAS RESPONSIBLE, THE PRESIDENT SEEMED TO ENJOY IT AND APPEARED UNAWARE OF THE NEGATIVE VIBRATIONS AMONG HIS COURTIER, ESPECIALLY THE SENIOR MILITARY, UPON WHOM SO MUCH OF HIS FUTURE PROGRAMS WILL DEPEND. ONLY THE MARCOS CHILDREN, TO THEIR CREDIT, APPEARED EMBARRASSED BY THE DISPLAY. TO PROVIDE THE FULL TENOR OF THE EVENT, I AM SENDING BY SEPARATE AIRGRAM THE FULL TEXT OF THE PRGRAM NOTES WHICH ACCOMPANIED THE CONCERTO COMMISSIONED FOR THE OCCASION.

SULLIVAN

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